

Child Care Services Development Permit Data Analysis

Summary of Findings

Administration analysed one year of child care services development permit and variance data under Zoning Bylaw 20001 from 2024. This data was compared with data from 2019 to 2023 under the former Zoning Bylaw 12800. A detailed description of the methodology used for this analysis is listed on page 13 of this attachment. Home based child care was not included in this analysis.

Five key findings emerged from the data analysis:

1. The volume of approved child care service development permit applications increased significantly in 2024.
2. The number of permitted development approvals for child care services increased significantly in 2024, including in the small scale residential zones.
3. Child care service approvals in 2024 occurred across diverse zones city-wide.
4. The greatest proportion of variances for child care services in 2024 occurred in the small scale residential zones.
5. The minimum on-site pick up and drop off space requirement was the most frequently varied regulation for child care services in the small scale residential zones in 2024 and was the most common reason for refusal.

The five findings indicate that simpler approval processes are now available for child care services and flexible zones allow for more child care development opportunities across the city. However, some child care regulations are more difficult to meet in a small-scale residential setting, particularly the minimum on-site pick-up and drop-off requirement.

Methodology

The following table outlines how categories were established for the purposes of this analysis.

Category	Included in Analysis
Small Scale Residential Zones	2019-2023: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● RF1, RF2, RF3, RF4, RF5, RSL, RPL, RSM and RSF 2024: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● RS - Small Scale Residential Zone, ● RSF - Small Scale Flex Residential Zone ● RSM - Small-Medium Scale Transition Residential Zone No child care services were approved in small scale residential special area zones.
Child Care Development Permits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Change of use permits (change of use to child care services) ● Exterior and interior alteration permits for child care services ● Permits to increase capacity of an existing child care service ● New construction permits for child care services
Issued Child Care Development Permits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Child care development permits issued by the City - regardless of Subdivision and Development Appeal Board (SDAB) outcome ● Child care development permits refused by the City and overturned by the SDAB
Discretionary Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Where child care services are listed as a discretionary use in a zone. ● Where child care services are issued as a discretionary development because of a variance.
New Child Care Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Change of use permits (change of use to child care services) ● New construction permits for child care services

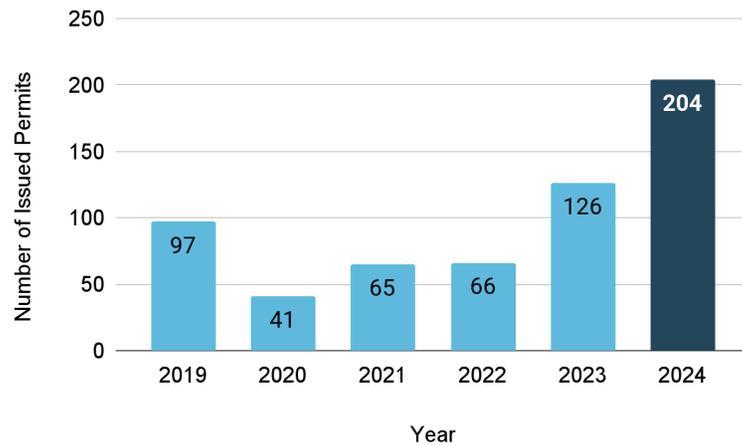
Increased Volume of Child Care Service Development Permit Applications

The City received and issued more child care services development permit applications in 2024 than in previous years.

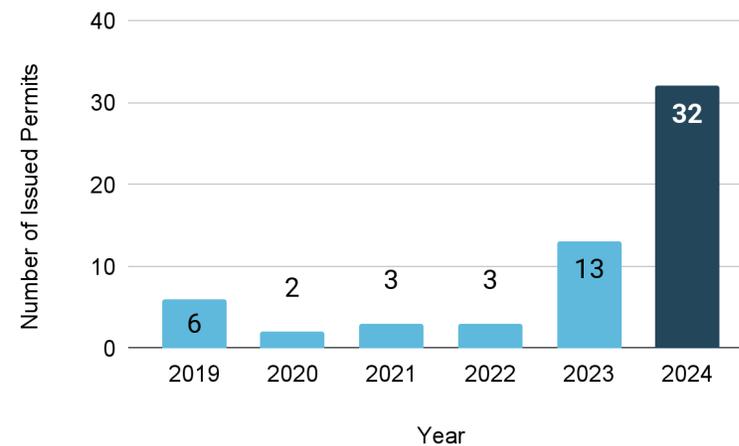
A variety of factors influence the number of applications received including population growth and availability of government funding for child care service providers and families.

Issued Development Permits for Child Care Services

Graph 1: City Wide (All Zones) 2019-2024



Graph 2: Small-Scale Residential Zones 2019-2024



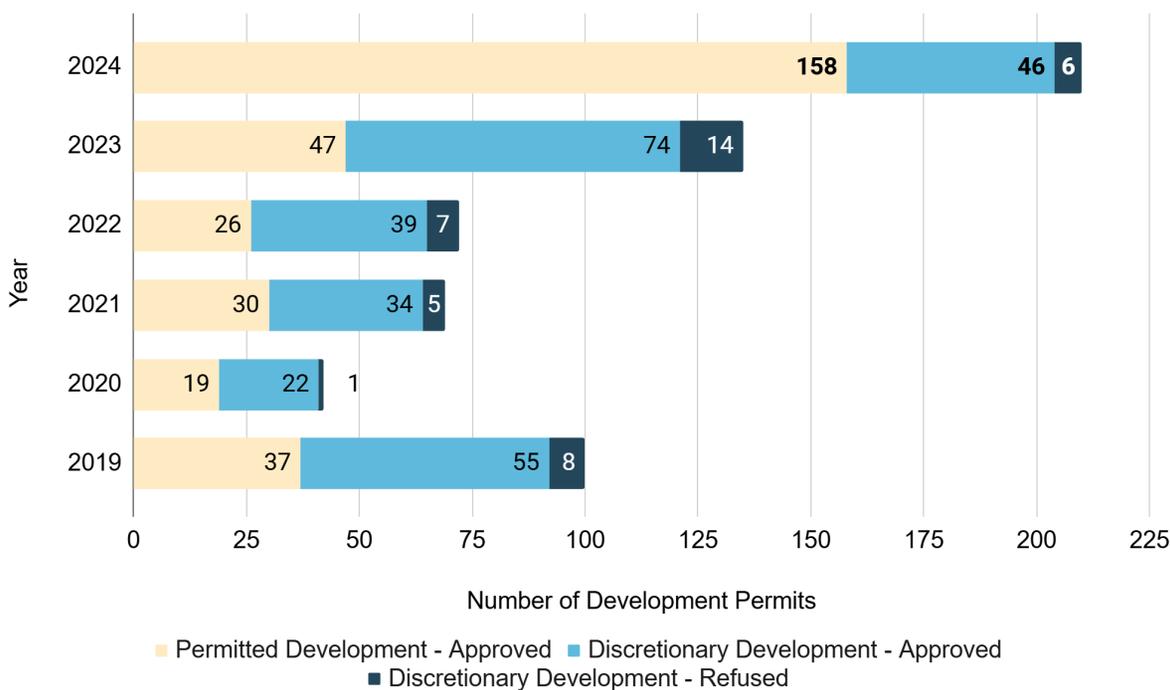
Note: Child care development permits include change of use permits, exterior and interior alteration permits, permits to increase capacity of an existing child care service and new construction permits.

A Simpler Path to Approval

Under Zoning Bylaw 20001, child care services are listed as a permitted use in most standard zones. This is a change from the previous Zoning Bylaw 12800, which often listed child care services as a discretionary use. This change is intended to provide greater certainty in the development review process and clearly establish development expectations through regulations.

There was a significant increase in the number of permitted development approvals for child care services in 2024 compared to previous years. This means shorter review times and less likelihood of appeal when a development meets the regulations of the zoning bylaw.

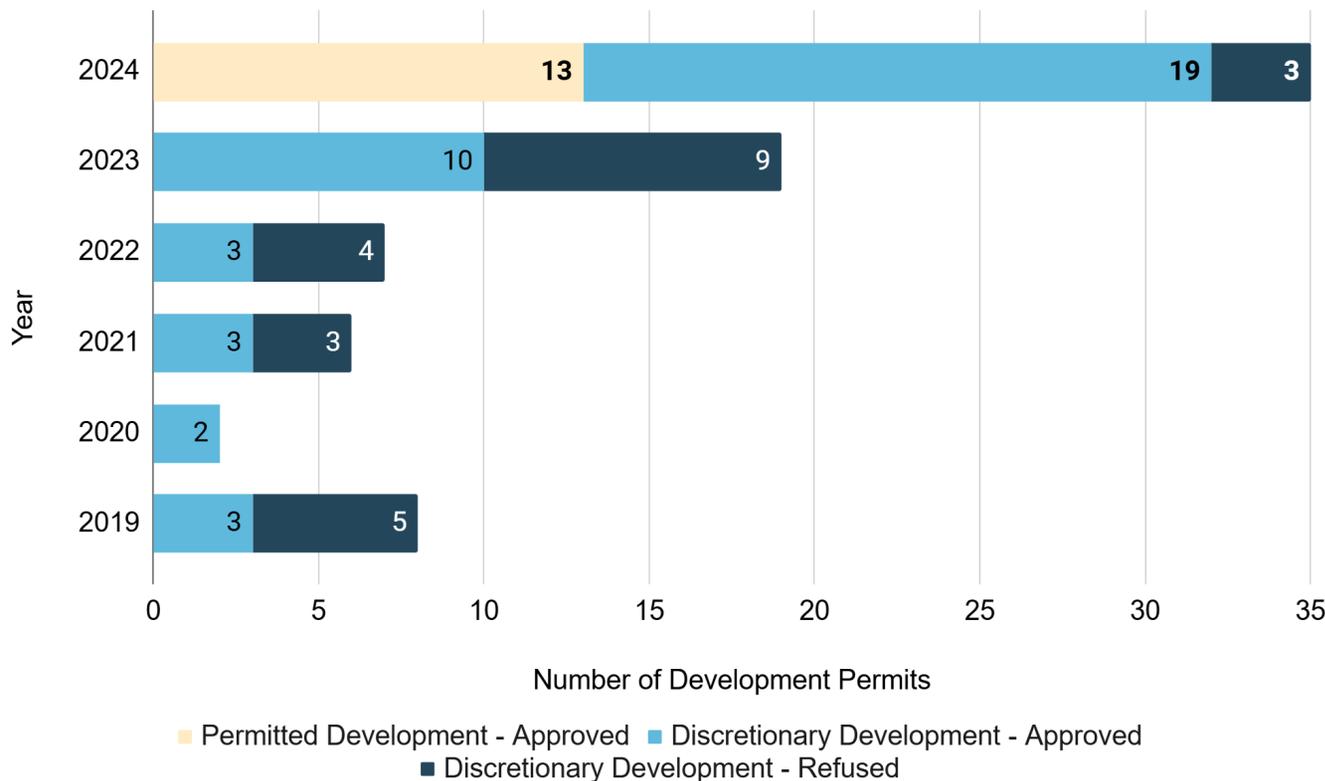
Graph 3: Child Care Services Development Permit Outcomes for All Zones 2019-2024



The proportion of permitted development approvals for child care services has risen significantly since Zoning Bylaw 20001 came into effect, with 75 per cent of applications (158) issued as permitted developments in 2024 compared to an average of 39 per cent across the previous 5 years.

Graph 4: Child Care Services Development Permit Outcomes for Small-Scale Residential Zones 2019-2024

Under Zoning Bylaw 12800, child care services were listed as a discretionary use under the small scale residential zones. This meant that child care could only be approved as a discretionary development. Under Zoning Bylaw 20001 small scale residential zones, child care services are listed as a permitted use. In 2024, 37 per cent of child care applications (13) were approved as permitted developments in small scale residential zones and a significantly smaller proportion of applications were refused (8 per cent compared to an average of 43 per cent over the past five years).

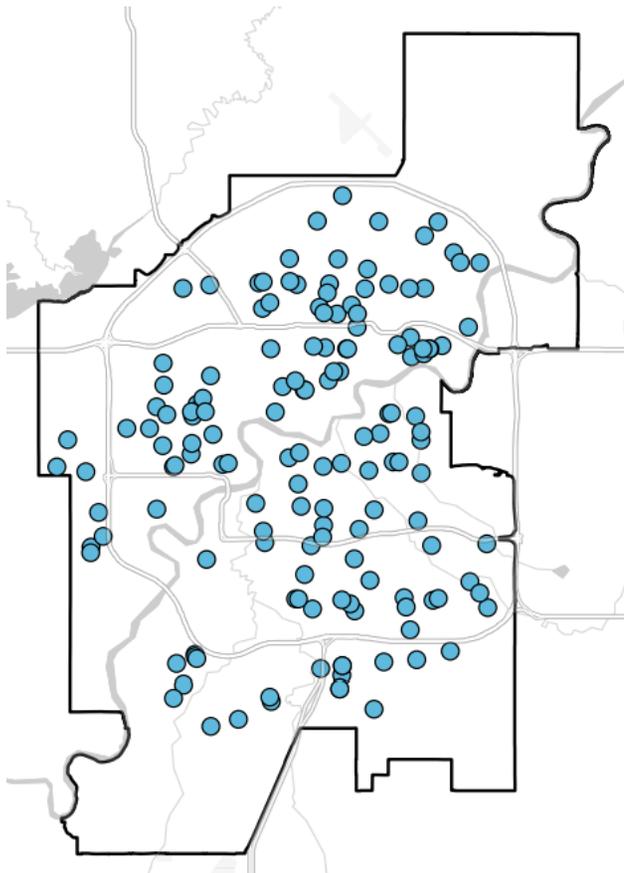


Despite this increase, graphs 3 and 4 show that the proportion of discretionary development permit applications for child care services is higher under the small scale residential zones than other zones. This indicates a higher frequency of variances under the small scale residential zones.

Distribution of Child Care Approvals

In 2024, development permits issued for child care services were distributed across the city and across different zones. While the bulk of child care services approvals occurred in the commercial and residential zones, child care services were also approved on school sites, in industrial areas and in mixed use zones.

Distribution of Development Permits Issued for New Child Care Facilities in 2024



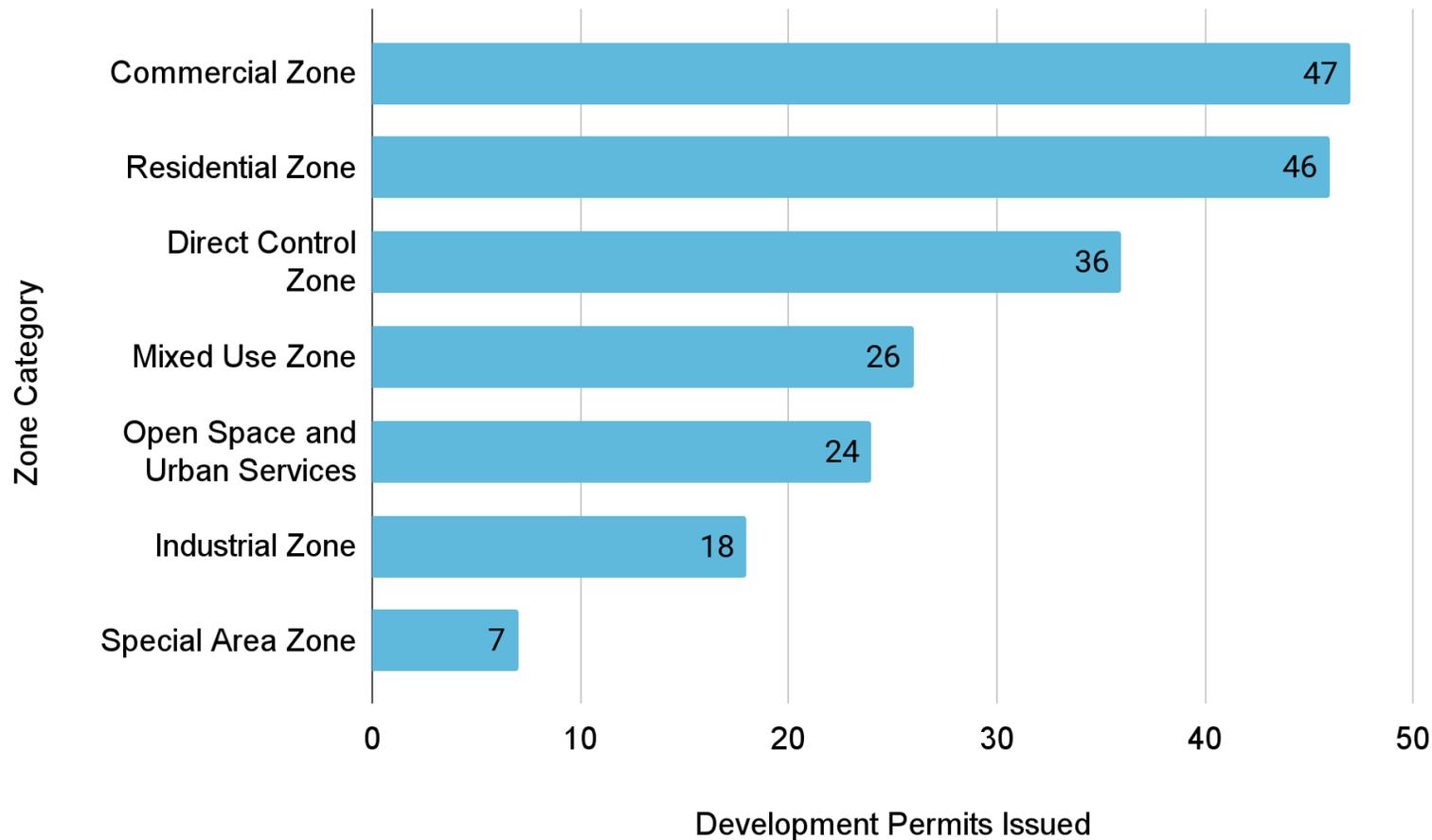
This map shows the distribution of 149 development permits issued for new child care facilities in Edmonton in 2024. The map only includes development permits for new child care facilities. It does not include development permits for interior or exterior alterations or increases in capacity to existing child care services.

Legend

- Development Permit Issued for New Child Care Facility
- ▭ City of Edmonton Boundary

Graph 5: Child Care Development Permits Issued by Zone Category in 2024

While development permits issued in 2024 for child care services occurred in a variety of zones, a significant proportion (46 per cent) were issued in commercial and residential zones.

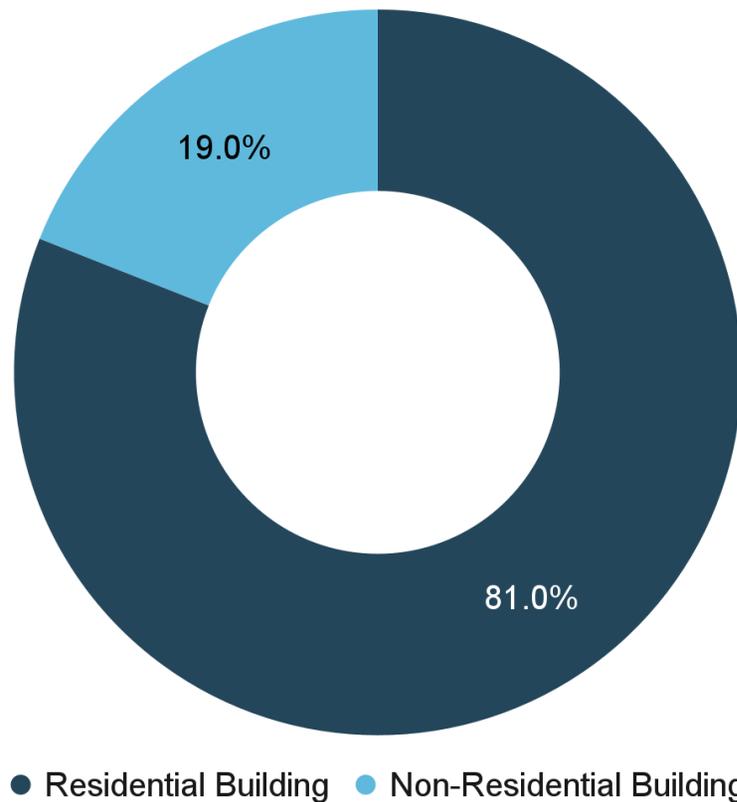


Child Care Service Development in the Small Scale Residential Zones

In 2024, the majority of development permit applications for child care services were for conversions of residential buildings in small scale residential zones.

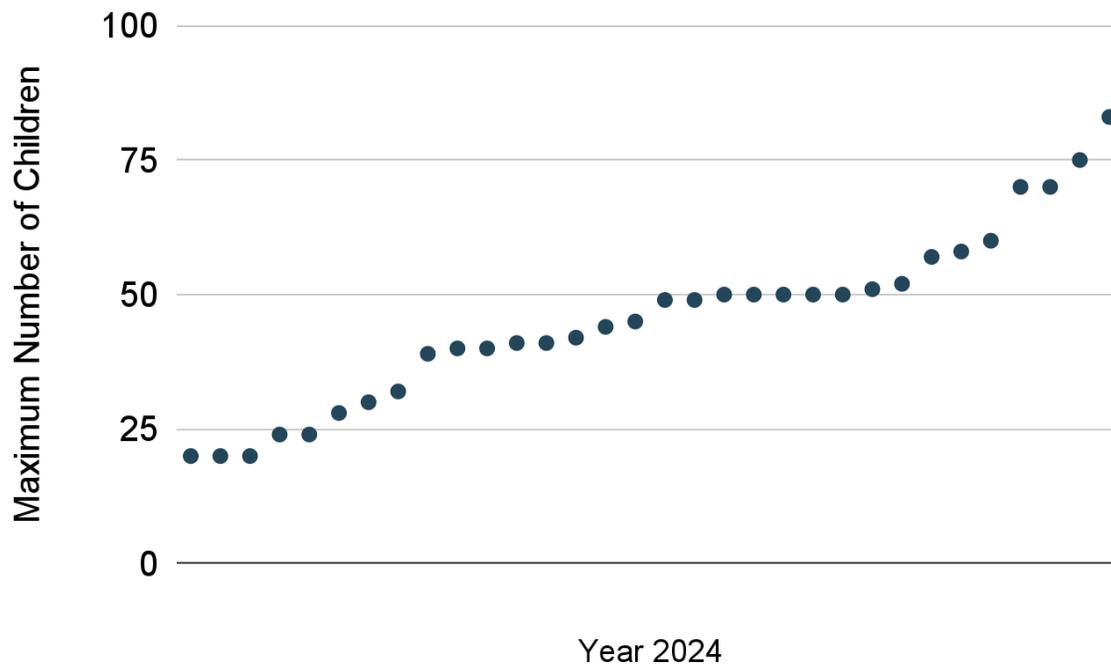
The average maximum capacity for child care services in small scale residential zones was 45 children.

Graph 6: Development Permits for Child Care Services in the Small Scale Residential Zones in 2024 by Building Type



In the small scale residential zones in 2024, six child care services development permits were approved within an existing non-residential building and 26 were approved within an existing residential building.

Graph 7: Capacity of Child Care Developments Issued in the Small Scale Residential Zones in 2024



In the small scale residential zones in 2024, the smallest child care service approved was for 20 children and the largest was for 83 children. On average, the maximum capacity of child care services approved was 45 children.

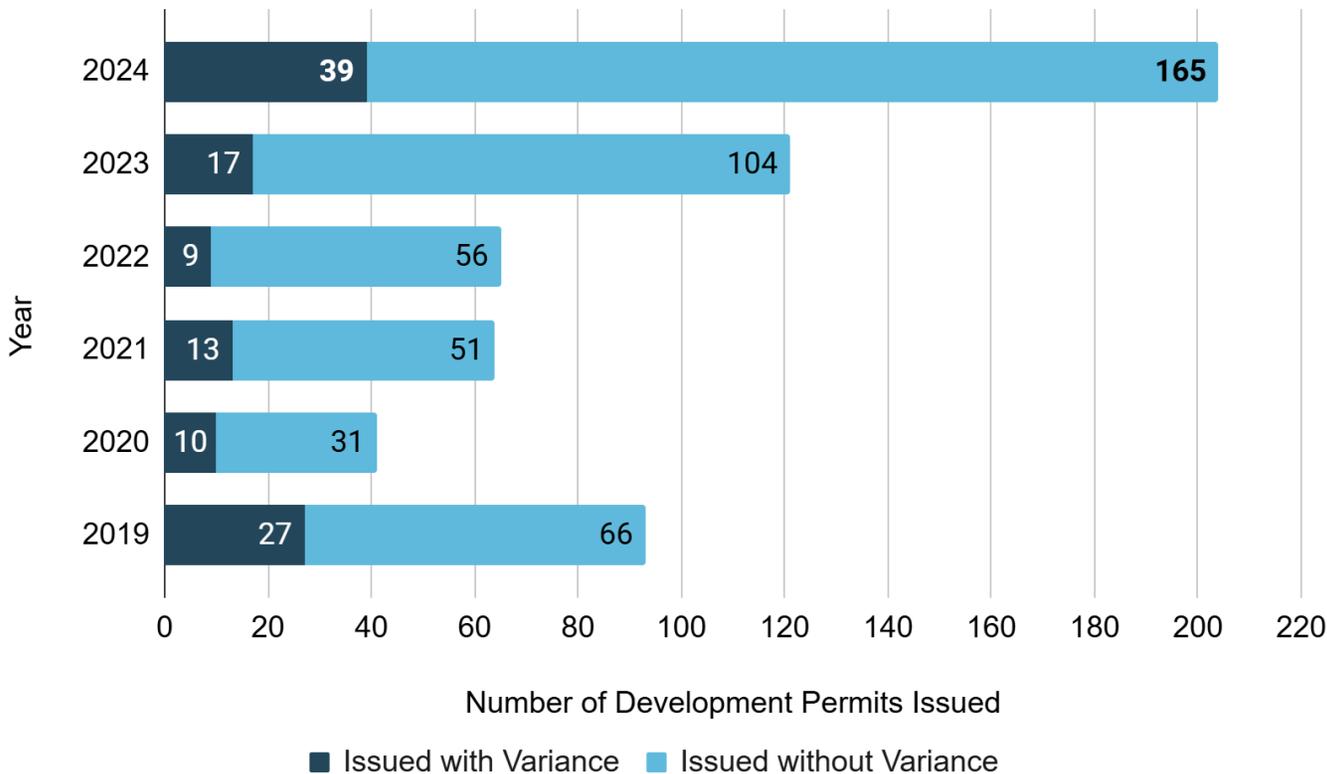
While maximum floor area and required on-site pick up and drop off spaces influence child care facility capacity through the development permit, the actual licensed capacity might be lower as determined by the physical indoor and outdoor playspace requirements of provincial regulations.

Note: This graph does not take into account reductions to child care facility capacity as a result of SDAB decisions.

Variations, Appeals and Refusals for Child Care Services Development

Development permits for child care services experience higher numbers of variations, appeals and refusals in the small scale residential zones than in other zones. The minimum on-site pick-up and drop-off requirement is the most commonly varied regulation and the most common reason for refusal of child care service development in the small scale residential zones.

Graph 8: Child Care Service Development Permits Issued with Variations for All Zones 2019-2024

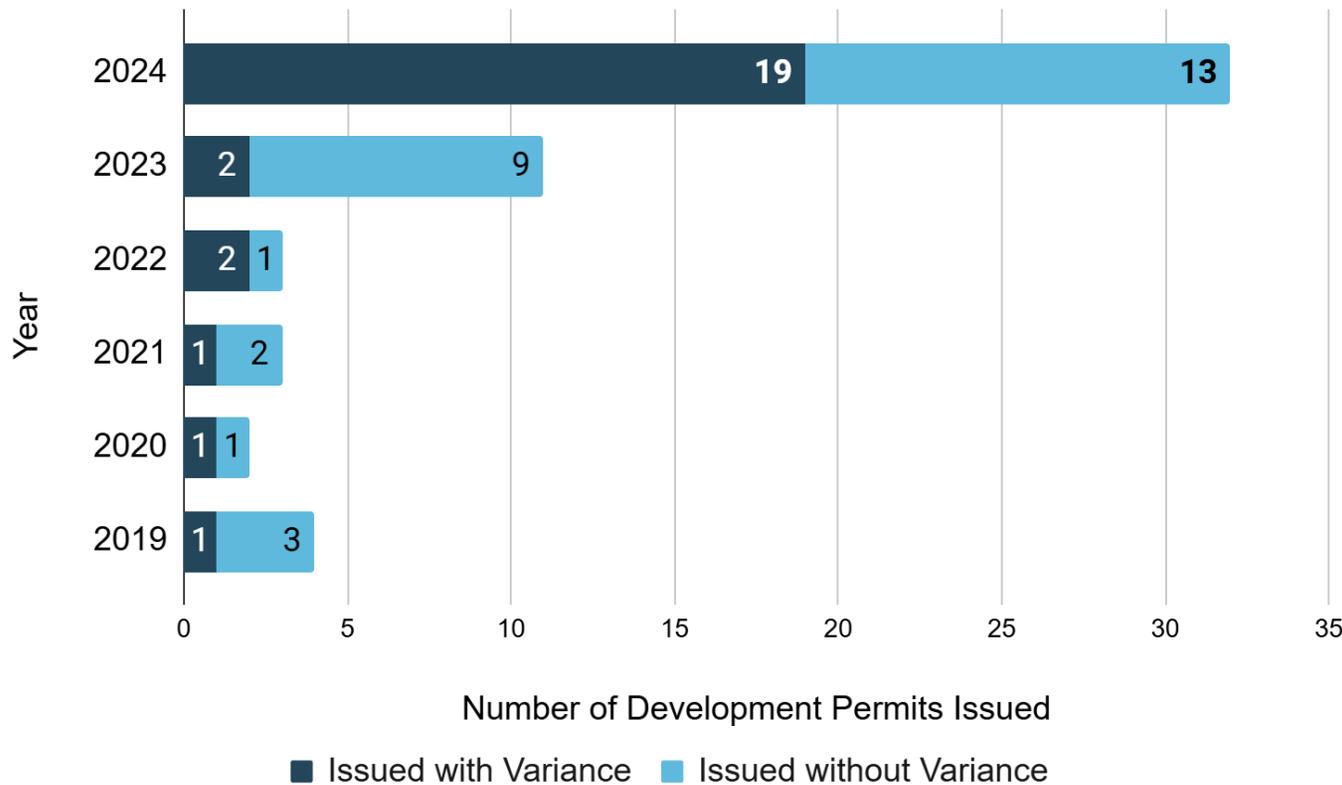


Most development permits for child care services are issued without variations. This trend has continued post-Zoning Bylaw renewal.

These numbers suggest that the variance tool continues to be applied as intended - infrequently and where appropriate in unique situations.

Graph 9: Child Care Service Development Permits Issued with Variances in the Small-Scale Residential Zones 2019-2024

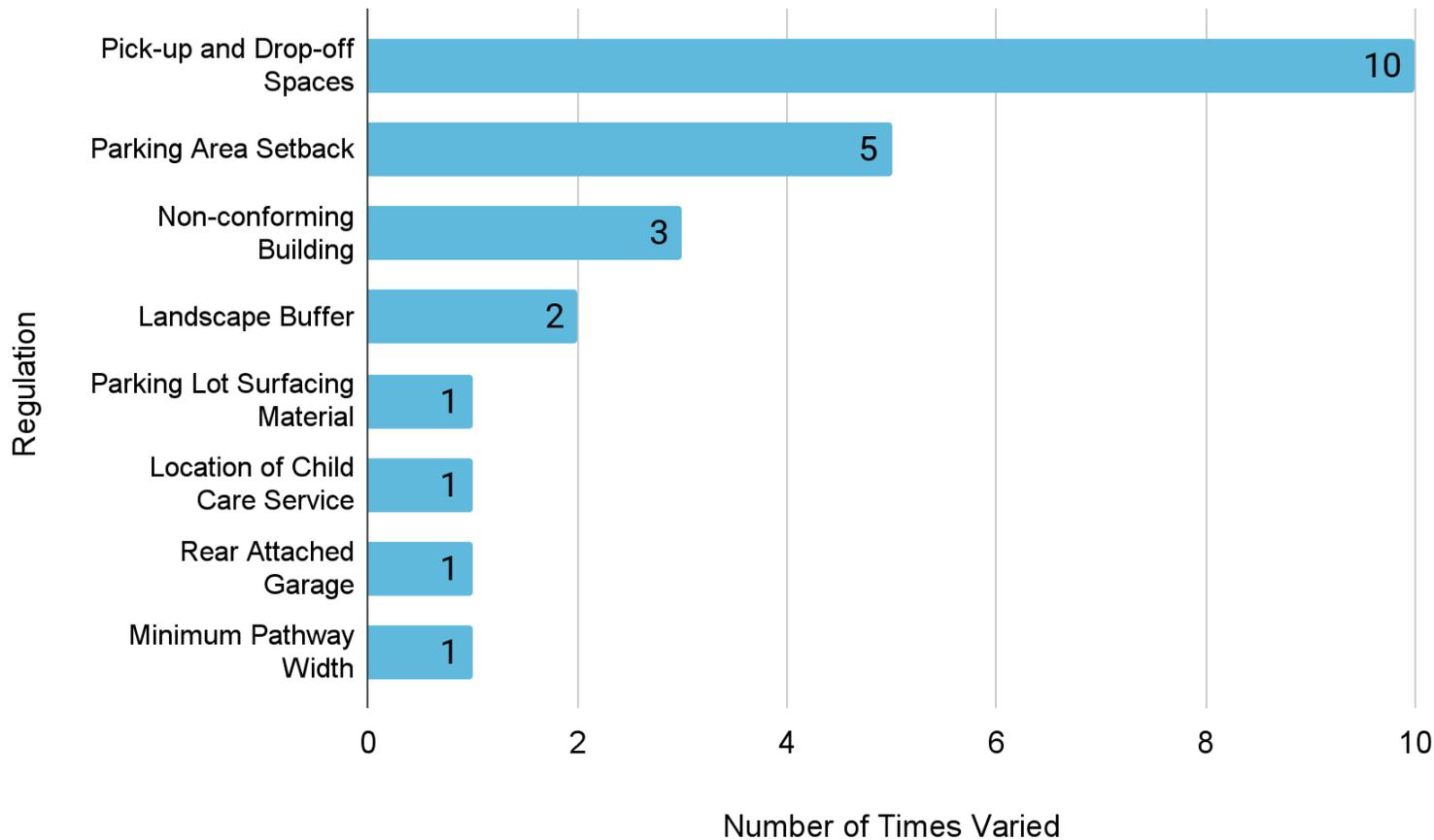
The proportion of development permits for child care services issued with variances is higher in the small scale residential zones (59 per cent) than across all other zones (19 per cent). This could suggest that some child care services regulations may be more difficult to achieve in a small scale residential setting.



Of the 19 applications issued with variances in the small scale residential zones, seven applications (37 per cent) were appealed at the Subdivision and Development Appeal Board (SDAB). No child care permits issued with variances in other zones were appealed at the SDAB in 2024.

Graph 10: Regulations Varied for Child Care Services in the Small-Scale Residential Zones in 2024

The regulation that was most frequently varied for child care service development permit applications in 2024 was the pick-up and drop-off space requirement. Out of 32 development permits issued for child care in the small scale residential zones, 10 received a variance to the pick up and drop off requirement. This is likely due to challenges fitting the required pick-up and drop-off spaces on smaller residential lots.



Reasons for Child Care Service Development Permit Refusal in the Small Scale Residential Zones in 2024

Out of 35 child care service development permit applications processed under the small scale residential zones in 2024:

- three were refused by the City
- three applications issued by the City were overturned and refused by the SDAB

Insufficient provision of on-site pick-up and drop-off spaces was cited as one of the reasons in the justification for refusal for five of the six applications, as summarized in Table 1 below:

Application #	Reasons for Refusal
Refused by City	
Application 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimum Pick-up and Drop-off Space requirement (deficient by six spaces)
Application 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimum Pick-up and Drop-off Space requirement (deficient by two spaces) • Alley Access requirement • Parking Area Setback requirement • Bike parking requirement
Application 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimum Pick-up and Drop-off Space requirement (deficient by four spaces) • Screening of waste bins requirement
Refused by SDAB	
Application 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimum Pick-up and Drop-off Space requirement (deficient by two spaces)
Application 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alley Access requirement
Application 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimum Pick-up and Drop-off Space requirement (deficient by two spaces)